

**The Greene School
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
94 John Potter Rd
West Greenwich, RI
February 27th, 2013
7 PM**

Call to order at 7:03 PM

Members present: Laura Clavette, Amy Pratt, Debbie Fletcher, Karen O'Neil, Kelly Presley, Jim Constantine, Jen Sherer, Christa Andrews- Quorum met with 8/10 members present

Non-members present: Deanna Duncan, Jon Anderson, Melissa Burnett-Testa, Joshua Schatz, Jill Page, Christine Caron, as well as members of the public, including some students of the school, were also in attendance.

Reading of the Mission Statement- done by Debbie Fletcher

Karen made a motion to accept the minutes from 12/19/12 . Christa 2nd. Both Jen and Debbie abstained from the vote. Everyone agreed unanimously.

Christa made a motion to accept the minutes from 01/16/13 with one noted change- remove "Lottery must be held a certain way" from 3.b under old business. Jim 2nd. All agreed unanimously.

Executive Session:

1. R.I.G.L. 42-46-5 (a)(1) job performance/character (re: potential teacher non-renewals)- notice provided to affected individuals
2. Both Mr. Schatz and Ms. Caron notified the BOD in writing that they would like the meeting to be held in Open Session.
3. No executive session was held

Open Session:

Jon Anderson, legal counsel from Edwards Wildman in Providence, introduced himself and explained the process of conducting a vote on the non-renewal letters being given to two teachers at the school- Mr. Joshua Schatz and Ms. Christine Caron

He explained that this is the same process for all public schools and is based on Rhode Island General Law.

There is a March 1st deadline for these letters, which is a written document provided to teachers of the decision not to renew their contract.

Mr. Anderson reviewed some examples of reasons schools give notices of non-renewals.

The standard is very low for a non-tenured teacher and the reasons being given to Mr. Schatz and Ms. Caron is that there is a better teacher available. Mr. Anderson clarified that after the Board votes on the recommendation tonight; the teachers have a right to request a formal hearing before the BOD. The teachers will need to put that request in writing within 15 days from this meeting tonight.

A hearing is very formal. The teacher can have an attorney there.

Testimony is given under oath and there will be a stenographer there to record the meeting.

Amy Pratt- stated that tonight there is a recommendation from the Head of School before the Board to issue Letters of Non-renewal to two teachers: Mr. Joshua Schatz and Ms. Christine Caron. As a Board, we have the responsibility to vote tonight on whether to approve this recommendation from our Head of School or not.

Dr. Pratt invited the public to speak.

Ms. Caron spoke- she asked about the process outlined by Mr. Anderson- if there is a way for the language in the letter to be different than: There is a better teacher available.

Mr. Anderson answered and said that, at this point, the answer is “no”

Ms. Caron feels that in the future, the language should be different.

Mr. Schatz read from a prepared statement and stated that he feels the basis of the reason he received a non –renewal letter (there are better teachers than him) is something that he would like the Board to really consider. He feels that he would like the Board to refocus on something more quantifiable- such as if he has performed his duty and whether students have benefited from his teaching.—He stated he has never had a meeting to discuss his performance and isn’t aware of any performance issues at this time. He feels he has put many hours into this school and has attended PD to improve the math program. He was asked to be a mentor. He is a founding staff leader- has helped develop the school’s culture and would like to continue to do so. He has also held a Crew since the school opened.

Next, several parents and students spoke on Mr. Schatz’s behalf:

Ms Cindy Chase , parent, spoke that her daughter has learned greatly from him and she is impressed with his ability to teach multiple math subjects at multiple times.

Ms. Amy B, student, spoke on behalf of herself and Indra B, student. Reading from a letter from Indra- she states that as both a Crew leader and math teacher, his teaching has furthered her learning greatly and has given her more confidence in her math skills- he teaches why, not just how. Crew has made the students feel more connected and more aware of themselves and others.

Ms. Amy B states that he has made her become more positive and feels she has improved as a human being in Crew. She feels that if he is not here for graduation next year, it will be a huge loss. She feels he is more than just a math teacher, he is a friend.

Derek C, student, spoke of his increased PSAT scores from sophomore year to junior year and stated that Mr. Schatz would help Derek with his learning targets after school and would make them a little harder to challenge Derek.

Julia C, student,- she has had him as a teacher for 3 years now. She has dyslexia and he has given her countless hours of math help. He makes math relevant and she loves math now.

Katie C, student, she is in Mr. Schatz's Crew. She started high school in a regular public school and felt like a little fish in a big pond- felt like she never had a voice in her advisory there- here she feels she can talk and she does have a voice.

Brooke O, student, spoke of his dynamic teaching style, infectious enthusiasm and devotion to the students. She was in his intensive and says that he is a great discussion leader and credits him with being one of her heroes as well as the best teacher she has ever had.

Beth Charlebois, parent, states that he has created a love of math for her daughter along with increased confidence. He requires a lot of work, but never leaves them behind. He has worked hard to figure out how to best teach her daughter. It brings her comfort to know her daughter is being so well cared for here.

Patrick B, student, has Mr. Schatz as his Crew leader and states Mr. Schatz is friends with most of the students and it is upsetting to remove a friend.

Jim Ortel, parent, has two students at the school. He, himself, has a background in engineering and was anxious to see how the math program would be at the school. He feels we should be very cautious to pass judgment on Mr. Schatz and that he has a lot of supporters. He is wondering on what grounds he is being removed.

Jill Page, teacher, read a letter from Chelsea F, student. She stated that she was grateful to him for taking time to help her prepare for her SAT's which gave her more confidence.

Jill Page, special education teacher at the school, spoke in support of Mr. Schatz. She said she is in and out of classrooms all day long and doesn't understand why each teacher isn't getting a letter as there are many better teachers out there for all of them. She wonders if this is due to a bad relationship with Ms. Duncan, Head of School, and wonders if there is any way to get help to repair this relationship.

Mr. Anderson spoke and again explained the standard- are there better teachers available? Mr. Anderson reviewed the Letter of Non-renewal process.

Mr. Anderson also reviewed the process of tenure, which by state law will occur after year 3 as a teacher and then it becomes very difficult to remove a teacher unless it's just cause and the standard becomes very high.

He also reminded all present of the process after this Board meeting- a hearing would be scheduled if requested by either teacher, Mr. Schatz or Ms. Caron.

Ms. Duncan made a recommendation for both teachers, Mr. Schatz and Ms. Caron to receive letters of non-renewal for the 2013-2014 school year.

Jen made a motion to give a letter of non-renewal to Mr. Schatz. Jim 2nd. Laura Clavette, Debbie Fletcher, Christa Andrews, and Kelly Presley abstained from the vote. All others agreed unanimously.

Jen made a motion to give a letter of non-renewal to Ms. Christine Caron. Karen 2nd. Debbie Fletcher and Christa Andrews abstained. All others agreed unanimously.

Old Business:

1. Outreach Committee Report
 - a. Lottery plans for March 1st

Random computer sort with BOD members present on Friday
45 students in each grade because some students leave the school
Amy, Laura and Pam Zabel to assist staff with the lottery
 - b. Land and Water Summit- March 9th
 - i. Dee, Amy, Debbie and Laura to staff this event
 - c. Update on outreach materials
 - i. Quote from O'Toole and Parr is \$1200.00
 - ii. Amy will get started on this
2. Finance Committee
 - a. Fiscal Policy Revision
 - i. Draft has been circulated
 - ii. Sue Crotty, Dee Duncan and Giselle Pellerano have gone through the policy to make sure our practices match it
 - iii. Discussion ensued.
3. Head of School Update
 - a. Report has been circulated
 - b. Two options for make up days: first would have students in school until June 25
 - c. Option 2 is to add two midweek days during April vacation.
 - d. Jen made a motion to choose the two days in April as make up days, Kelly 2nd All agree unanimously
 - e. RIDE is supposed to come and meet with Dee about NECAPS- a lot of information between NECAPS and school's diligence
 - f. Jay Fogleman meeting- he agreed to assign student teaching here and will try to find a teacher who is interested in being at TGS
 - g. In the fall, we will have a student teacher from RIC
 - h. NECAP scores are in and there is a lot to discuss to understand it and Ms. Duncan feels the two years of NECAP testing isn't really reflecting that the teaching is improving, just a different group of students with different academic strengths and weaknesses taking the test.
 - i. We have officially become a title 1 school- high enough Free and Reduced lunch, so we get the funds. Teachers are needed that can handle this at-risk population.
 - j. #10 in Ms. Duncan's report- potential effect of federal funds- sequestration on education in RI
 - k. A lot of PD around HOW of the students- considering Saturday workshop on mindsets
 - l. Data is showing that working on mindset will help students forward in their HOW
 - m. Seniors that took the NECAP -13 took it and mostly did grow

- n. Math interventions are 100% in place- meeting with students and parents to discuss this

4. Facilities Update

- a. Current location remodeling- \$5,000.00 previously approved to spend. Jeremy Sherer recommended a structural engineer, David Tidwell to look at the school. Mr. Tidwell feels that the wall in the cafeteria could probably be removed to expand a common meeting space. David Tidwell came but will need a carpenter's help to get further information on renovation options. Amy has called George Carpenter and hasn't heard back yet.
- b. Master Plan has increased the cost of the science building on Alton Jones campus to 3.5 million dollars- so this will also increase the time frame of raising the money and will mean we may need to stay at JP longer than we thought. Amy said that Dick feels we will need to renegotiate the lease. Our current lease extension needs to be signed by the end of March.
- c. Jim states that one of the reasons for the higher cost is that the project will be done in phases- the first one is the most significant one- site work, drainage and getting the site ready to be moved into as the other phases continue.
- d. Amy would like us to go with the lease on a yearly basis for now and continue to look into more space options at the school. Rent will go up as stated in our current option.
- e. Kelly made a motion to extend the lease for one more year. Jim 2nd. All agree unanimously.
- f. RGB contract update
 - i. Master Plan would be done by Feb 28th. We seem to have a good working relationship with them. They have had a few things come up, not their fault and they have shown good faith towards us.
- g. Master Plan update
 - i. Hourly rate proposal for slight revisions, updates to the MP have been negotiated with RGB.
 - ii. Amy said that Dick would like some controls on estimates before work is done-we need more discipline and written approval should be given to them by the board
 - iii. Melissa agrees with Dick's ideas. The agreement has been sent to Amy, not the lawyers. Melissa would like those controls built into the amendment.
 - iv. Jim made a motion to allow the facilities committee to solicit and accept a proposal from RGB for an hourly basis to update the Master Plan when reviewed and approved by counsel. Kelly 2nd. All agree unanimously.
 - v. Amy has sent edits to RGB on the draft Master Plan document.
 - vi. URI business grad students were on campus yesterday, they received a tour (3 students and their instructor) and they will create our business plan

5. Fundraising Update

- a. Kelly to assist Betsy and Amy with the start of the capital campaign.
- b. Host committee forming for the 100 mile radius dinner

New Business:

- 1. Pam Zabel's resignation from the board was formally announced
- 2. Committee Assignments
 - a. Standing committees:
 - i. Executive: Amy Pratt, Debbie Fletcher, Karen O'Neil, Laura Clavette
 - ii. Governance: Laura Clavette, Jim Constantine, Christa Andrews, Kelly Presley
 - iii. Finance and Audit: Karen O'Neil, Paul Morse, Deanna Duncan
 - iv. Academic Standards: Debbie Fletcher, Amy Pratt, Jen Sherer, Deanna Duncan, EL school designers
 - v. Personnel: Amy Pratt, Jen Sherer

Christa made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Debbie 2nd. All agree unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 9:25PM